

It's not an exaggeration to say that I learned German to read these texts. I was 19 & the parochialism of music education & public musical life in the US were unbearable. I'd tried transferring from a conservatory into a proper university & all that did was leave me desperate for something beyond the usual poles of music-is-unspeakable-ineffable-only-thinkable-in-its-practice / music-is-just-more-discourse-petrified-social relations... Then came Peter, & less than a year later I remember jokingly emailing him that I'd be on the lookout for a "Mystiker der Aufklärung" (a "mystic of the enlightenment," Christian Scheib's description of Ablinger) when I landed at Tegel airport. That was 15 years ago.

Back then I had no idea about the sheer volume of Peter's writing as so little of it was in English. At that time, my excitement about his work as something throttling the binary clichés so often still clinging to the sonic was something I could *hear* in his music (the first Kairos CD - Der Regen, das Glas, das Lachen - would have been in my ear at the time). It's funny to write that retrospectively - to think back on Ablinger's 90s work & what all was implicit in it, especially as it seems his recent work is cycling into a place that resonates strongly with the older work's material intelligence. Over the years the vocabulary changes, the accents & emphases & degrees of literalism & didacticism change, but the thought of a situated, or *positional*, listening (maybe the first & most lastingly relevant insight I gleaned from Ablinger's writing) remains constant.

"Situated" listening is not to be confused with something like "subjective" listening in a colloquial sense, rather it's that listening is something done *by* a subject - a particular subject - that is, from a position defined not only by its physiological specificity, but also by its personal & historical specificity - its raced, sexed, classed particularity. Not only is no sound innocent (music is still taking in that thought...), neither is any given listening. That, anyway, would be my current gloss on a train of thought dating back to my feverish early translation (just for myself, just to read it) of Peter's ancient waterfall text: "And yet what we perceive is not this Everything. What we hear is not really *that* Noise. We make a selection. We do what Debussy has said: I start with all the notes, keep out the ones I don't like, and let in the ones I do. This selection is our being."

In that sense, I used to imagine Peter as a kind of continuation of the prematurely aborted American post-Cage moment - that his insistent underlining & gesturing toward the listening subject made him a cousin of, e.g., Maryanne Amacher & her equally insistent emphasis on articulating her work as "WAYS OF LISTENING." I likewise imagined Peter's place, his *passing*, in academic new music as a kind of Trojan horse. But now, re-reading his texts in Meaghan's translation (an uncanny experience!) it's not that I don't think this remains true, but just that it's a lot more complex. It's not a matter of resolving, sublating, or even deconstructing oppositions (whether between Europe & America, Experimental & Traditional, Theoretical & Poetic), it's a matter of working-through (*durcharbeiten*) - of paying attention - of, as he's already so succinctly put it for us: listening to listening.

As well known as Peter's music has become, I'm excited by the prospect of this volume making us all listen again. I'm excited by the prospect of its both throwing us back on our own listening projections (Nope, it was never just more *Neue Musik*; Nope, it was never just more "Sound Art"), and of its offering us a mode of listening characterized by the inexhaustible intersection of our own irreducibly complex situated listenings, his, & of the likewise irreducibly complex situated materiality of the sonic. This publication is an invitation to join him in the space of a practice in which the distinctions between thinking, feeling, writing, composing, & listening become all but irrelevant - in which a 'work' becomes just one mode of expression in a complex of oscillatory sensation. At a moment when the *raisons d'être* of both 'Art' & 'Theory' seem to be buckling in the face of the present, the degree to which Ablinger's project exceeds & yet stays with the remnants of both makes it all the more urgent.

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